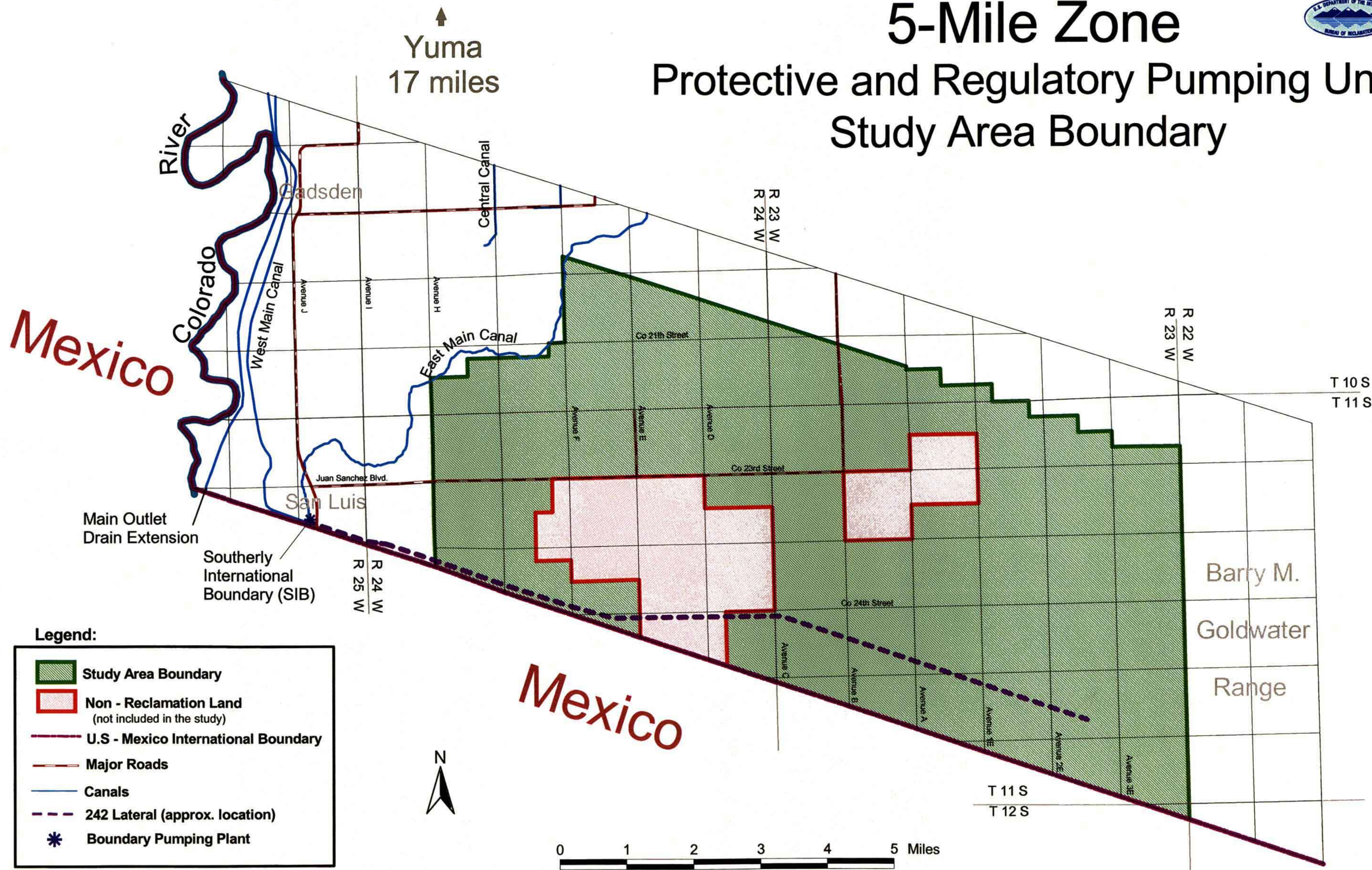


5-Mile Zone

Protective and Regulatory Pumping Unit Study Area Boundary



PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

Preparation and implementation of an RMP is a **Federal action** that is intended to direct the management of resources within the study area to maximize overall public and resource benefits for the next 10 years. NEPA requires Federal agencies to consider the potential effect(s) of a Federal action on the environment before implementing the proposed action. Therefore, Reclamation used a planning process and an appropriate level of environmental analysis to develop this RMP/EA. Once Reclamation adopts the RMP/EA, it will be used as the framework to manage lands within the study area.

PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR FEDERAL ACTION

The purpose of this RMP is to establish a 10-year conceptual plan detailing the management framework to conserve, protect, enhance, develop, and use the natural and cultural resources within the study area.

The RMP is needed to do the following:

- ❖ Provide decisionmakers with consistent direction and guidance to successfully manage the natural and cultural resources within the study area.
- ❖ Ensure management of the natural and cultural resources will be compatible with the authorized purposes of Title I of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974, P.L. 93-320, as amended by P.L. 96-336.
- ❖ Resolve land and water use issues and concerns within the study area related to the tremendous growth of the city of San Luis, Arizona, and surrounding area.
- ❖ Address the increasing demand for public use of the resources within the study area while protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural resources.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The RMP/EA has the following overall objectives:

- ❖ Explore ways to protect and enhance the natural and cultural resources.
- ❖ Identify and determine uses of Reclamation lands that are compatible and consistent with Reclamation's primary purpose.
- ❖ Identify long-term programs that address public health and safety, wildlife, recreation, and other resources.
- ❖ Identify financially feasible opportunities or partnerships to assist in managing the resources.

- ❖ Document management actions that will allow Reclamation to operate and maintain the study area for the primary purpose of Title I of the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974, as amended.
- ❖ Protect and conserve groundwater resources for use in partial satisfaction of the 1944 Water Treaty.

Additionally, in recent years, Reclamation's focus on developing large, federally financed agricultural and power projects has changed—as reflected in its mission statement—to that of managing, developing, and protecting water and related resources “in an environmentally sound manner. . .” The overall objectives for completing an RMP for the study area are consistent with the three objectives identified in Reclamation's *2000-2005 Strategic Plan*:

- ❖ Manage, develop, and protect water and related resources to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- ❖ Operate, maintain, and rehabilitate facilities safely, reliably, and efficiently to provide project benefits.
- ❖ Advance Reclamation's organizational effectiveness.

Chapter VI of this document contains specific Reclamation goals and accompanying objectives for the study area. These goals and objectives were formulated as a result of (1) public involvement, (2) agency consultation and coordination, and (3) Reclamation review of programs and policies. The goals and objectives are consistent with the provisions of existing laws and regulations.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE OF DOCUMENT

This RMP/EA provides a conceptual management framework to conserve, protect, enhance, develop, and use the natural and cultural resources within the study area. Because the RMP establishes only a conceptual framework for managing resources, the EA portions of this document focus on broad impacts associated with the alternatives. As stated previously, NEPA compliance will be completed, and site-specific environmental and cultural clearances will be obtained before any ground-disturbing activities begin.

The following paragraphs briefly describe, by chapter, the structure of this RMP/EA.

Chapter I: Introduction and Overview

Chapter I provides an introduction to and overview and history of the study area and sets forth the purpose and need for an RMP/EA, authorities, overall objectives, public involvement, consultation and coordination, and related activities occurring within and adjacent to the study area.

Chapter II: *Management Framework*

Chapter II establishes the management framework by describing the existing policies and programs affecting or influencing the use of Reclamation land and water and describes the responsibilities other entities may have in managing lands within the study area. Chapter II also describes the responsibilities other entities have in managing lands adjacent to the study area.

Chapter III: *Planning Issues, Opportunities, and Constraints*

Chapter III summarizes the key factors that influenced development of the RMP/EA by identifying the planning issues, opportunities, and constraints within the study area.

Chapter IV: *Alternatives*

Chapter IV describes the four alternatives, including the preferred alternative and the No Action Alternative, formulated in response to the issues identified by the public and Reclamation.

Chapter V: *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences*

Chapter V describes the affected environment of the study area and discusses the potential effects of the alternatives on resources and environmental factors (environmental consequences).

Chapter VI: *Final Resource Management Plan*

Chapter VI describes in detail the RMP, the preferred alternative selected by Reclamation. The chapter details the management goals and objectives and the management strategies and directives for the study area for the next 10 years.

OVERVIEW OF STUDY AREA AND BACKGROUND

The 5-mile zone is a 5-mile-wide, 13-mile-long strip of land about 10 miles south of Yuma, Arizona, in the extreme southwestern part of the State. (See **map I-3**, 5-mile zone boundary map.) The Southerly International Boundary (SIB) between the United States and Mexico forms the 5-mile zone's southern boundary. The 5-mile zone's northern boundary parallels its southern boundary. From its western boundary, formed by the limitrophe section of the international boundary,¹ the 5-mile zone extends 13 miles southeast to the boundary of the Barry M. Goldwater Range. The city of San Luis is located in the southwest portion of the 5-mile zone.

¹ "Limitrophe" refers to the international boundary between the United States and Mexico formed by the Colorado River.

As discussed previously, the study area only includes those lands within the 5-mile zone that are east of Avenue H and under the jurisdiction of Reclamation. Other lands within the 5-mile zone are owned or managed by BLM, State of Arizona, city of San Luis, or private landowners. Reclamation does not have authority to conduct planning activities or prescribe management actions for lands that are not under its jurisdiction and are outside the study area.

The city of San Luis is the largest community nearest the study area, with a population of 15,322. The city of Yuma, about 10 miles north of the 5-mile zone, has a population of 83,330 (Eatherly, 2004). The other communities of significance near the 5-mile zone are Somerton, located about halfway between Yuma and the 5-mile zone, and Gadsden, located just north of San Luis. San Luis Rio Colorado, Mexico, is immediately across the international boundary from San Luis, Arizona, and has an estimated population of 250,000.

Irrigated agriculture is important in Yuma County and within the 5-mile zone. It is particularly important near the city of San Luis, where agricultural lands make up approximately 29 percent of the total land base. Crops include upland cotton, wheat, alfalfa hay, vegetables, and citrus fruit.

History of 5-Mile Zone

In 1944, the United States and Mexico signed a treaty (1944 Water Treaty) requiring the United States to deliver 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water to Mexico each year. The treaty did not address the salinity of the delivered water. By 1961, the salinity of the delivered water had increased from about 700-920 parts per million (ppm) of total dissolved solids (TDS) to 2,500 ppm in some months. The increased salinity was caused by (1) discharge to the Colorado River of saline irrigation drainage pumped from new wells in the Wellton-Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District; (2) reduced excess Colorado River flows, resulting from the construction of Glen Canyon Dam; and (3) reduced Gila River flows, resulting from the construction of Painted Rock Dam.

The United States and Mexico attempted to resolve the salinity problem for more than a decade. Finally, in August 1973, the two countries reached a permanent solution to the problem in the form of Minute No. 242 of the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC 242 Minute). (See attachment A.) IBWC 242 Minute contains several provisions, including the following:

- ❖ Each country shall limit pumping of groundwaters in its territory within 5 miles of the Arizona-Sonora boundary near San Luis, Arizona, to 160,000 acre-feet annually.
- ❖ The United States shall deliver approximately 140,000 acre-feet annually at the Southerly International Boundary to partially satisfy treaty requirements.

The Congress passed P.L. 93-320 (known as the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act of 1974 [Act]) in June 1974; attachment B), to enable the United States to comply with its obligations under IBWC 242 Minute. Section 103 (a) of the Act authorized the